LOCAL NEWS

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'Shocking' CPR Decision Will Face Bitter Protests

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'Terrible News' City's Reaction To CPR Stand

Exclamations of dismay, slightly tempered by "it had to happen" or "they couldn't keep on with those costs" came from the Victoria man-in-the-street yesterday in the wake of the CPR's announced boat-service curtailment.

All winter boat service between Victoria-Vancouver and Victoria-Seattle will be cut off effective Feb. 26 until summer schedules begin.

Strong reaction came from Chief Constable John Blackstock of Victoria.

"This creates a serious problem for us," he said, "primarily in the transport of mental patients to the mainland."

Said Leonard French, 326 Simcoe: "It will put a serious crimp in business. Look what happened during the strike last year."

"Victoria's position as a year-round tourist resort should be considered before anything like this is done," said M. J. Larson, 2522 Quadra, a member of the Royal Canadian Navy.

"It's a very poor show. They're leaving Victoria stranded," said A. G. (Sandy) Lett, 2501 Cook.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Page, 319 Gorge West, were planning a combined business and pleasure trip to Seattle at the end of February.

"This is terrible news," they said. "It makes it so awkward for Victorians planning such trips for any reason."

Said Victor Harrison, 823 Anderson: "Year-round service should be maintained. They make a big haul in the summer, then cut off the winter run!"

"The CPR just wants out of Victoria," said A. Clyde, Fairfield Hotel. "They're doing well in Nanaimo now. It was different 40 years ago."

Said Mrs. Ivy Brown, 2803 Gosworth: "I never heard anything so silly in my life."

Donald Davidson, 607 Beach, said: "Victoria needs good service, but I don't know where it will come from if the CPR and TCA both pull out."

In similar vein, R. H. Harrison, 1130 Vista Heights, said: "Transportation is a federal matter. It is up to the federal government to do something. We must have service of some kind and it is up to them to step in as the province did with Black Ball last year."

Louis Callan, 2574 Epworth, said: "Something like this had to be expected on the basis of passengers carried. No one can carry on a business at a loss."

Citizens Help Family

Generous Victorians have donated $824.75 and a quantity of furniture to the Donald McQueen family who lost all their belongings when their rented home at 422 Parry burned Sunday morning.

At 9.30 this morning, the Century Toppers' Club will drive through Victoria picking up the pledged furniture which will be stored at the James Bay Community Club hall until the family finds a new home, club spokesman Mrs. Harold Ketchell said last night.

Parking Land Appraisals Please Dowell

Independent appraisals of property needed by the city for its parking building across View between Douglas and Blanshard were received yesterday and Acting Mayor Arthur Dowell said he regarded them as encouraging.

He said they were "very little different" from the estimates of the city engineer—"not a hill of beans between them."

The acting mayor said the appraisals would be "the nucleus now of getting busy, and acting to acquire the properties, which will be the first step in the program."

JOHN COOPER

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Seen In Passing

John Cooper using a mattock as he cut down broom bushes in Beacon Hill Park to make room for planting pine trees. (He is a gardener at the park and has been working for the city for 11 years. He is interested in all sorts of sports but he particularly enjoys playing soccer) . . . **Pat Phipps** sawing lumber at Ogden Point . . . **Mrs. Mary E. Owen** telling about the 28-hand she was dealt in a crib game with **Ken Priske** and **Hugh Wadams** . . . **Cee Wright** growing another mustache he hopes will bring in channel 13 . . . **Hal Straight** watching proceedings in the legislature from the Speaker's gallery.

Dynamite Found In Lot

Ten sticks of dynamite, in dangerous condition, were found in a vacant lot alongside a Sidney house yesterday morning.

A team of demolition men from HMCS Naden were called in by Sidney RCMP to sink the explosives in 900 feet of water off Patricia Bay.

FOUND IN FIELD

Axel Ostram, whose house is near the Bazan Bay brickyard on the Patricia Bay Highway, found the explosives in a field alongside his home. The nitroglycerine was oozing out of the sticks.

Police called in a two-man team from HMCS Naden Naval Diving School under the command of Lt.-Cmdr. Ben Ackerman.

SUNK IN SEA

The explosive was put in a sack with weights and driven in an explosives truck to the RCN wharf at Patricia Bay where it was loaded on HMCS Songhees.

Sinking of the sack in sea water rendered the explosives harmless in a few hours, experts said.

Victoria Man Joins CNR Research Unit

W. Herbert Bailey of Victoria was named a staff officer of a new unit in the economics branch of the CNR research and development department in Montreal yesterday.

New President

Installed as new president of the Victoria Gizeh Temple Shrine Club at annual installation ceremonies last night, Charles Savage, bottom, is shown with installing master Robert Foulis of Vancouver, centre, and Illustrious Potentate Harry Borgerson of Vancouver. Members of the Shrine Club and wives attended a banquet at the Sirocco Supper Club.—(Colonist photo.)

'Almost Calamity' —Dowell

Acting-Mayor Arthur Dowell said last night Victoria "will have to take some action" over discontinuance of the winter ferry service between Victoria and Vancouver and Seattle.

"This is really shocking," he said. "We shouldn't be cut off practically entirely. In view of the fact that the federal government took over in the Canadian Pacific strike, I see no reason why they shouldn't take over again until an adequate schedule is worked out.

PART OF CANADA

"We are part of Canada and should have some consideration."

The discontinuance, he said, was "too drastic entirely" and "almost a calamity."

Other community leaders echoed his words.

ALL ISLAND AFFECTED

"I certainly think we should protest, because any reduction of service affects the whole of Vancouver Island and particularly Greater Victoria," said Reeve George Chatterton of Saanich.

The situation, he said, lent more urgency to making sure Trans-Canada Air Lines continued to provide the air service between Victoria and Vancouver and Seattle.

MUST BE RELIABLE

"We must have a reliable service, and this is another reason for urging TCA continuation," he said.

Reeve George Murdoch of Oak Bay said he didn't know of much that could be done "except send a protest from council to the federal government."

SUBSIDIES NO GOOD

Reeve A. C. Wurtele of Esquimalt took the opposite view. He didn't think protesting was right, he said: if the service couldn't be made to pay, nothing could be done. Subsidies, he said, were no good.

But G. Conway Parrott, president of the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, suggested continuation of the ferry service was a federal government responsibility.

REMEMBER AGREEMENTS

"Keeping in mind the agreements which formed part of the entrance of British Columbia into confederation in 1871, possibly the federal government should consider . . . continuing the service by subsidy," he said.

Mr. Parrott said the loss of the last direct sea link between Victoria and the mainland after nearly 100 years of service "is one that cannot be borne lightly by the people of Victoria."

REAL CRISIS

Victoria was facing a real transportation crisis, he said. Not only was it being deprived of boat service as a result of air transportation, but there also was a danger of being sidetracked by loss of the present TCA service and its replacement with a feeder service lacking a trans-continental operation.

First Call in Long Sea Career

Maiden voyage of 13,056-ton Norwegian freighter Rolv Jarl brought Captain Nils Alstad here on his first visit to the West Coast in 41 years of seafaring. He took command of spanking new ship at West German builders' yard last December. It brought a cargo of cars, now is loading lumber at Ogden Point.—(Colonist photo.)

CNR, City Firm Protest

Court of Revision Defers Judgment

Court of revision on Victoria assessments reserved judgment yesterday in two of the biggest cases before it.

One was the protest of Crowe Gonnason Co. Ltd. (in liquidation) against assessments on its mill properties. Some of the buildings, counsel claimed, had no sale value, didn't add to the value of the land, were derelict and should not be assessed at all.

NOT WORTH IT

Counsel for the company claimed, that the assessment on the buildings was based on a sale value of $165,000, and "there isn't anyone breathing who would pay that for the buildings on the property."

"I wouldn't," said the chairman, Waldo Skillings.

CNR PROTEST

In the other case, the Canadian National Railway Co. protested against assessments on two large parcels of land it leases from the province on the Victoria West industrial reserve.

City Assessor Alfred Joyce said the land had been appraised by the province at $15,000 an acre but assessed by him at $6,000 an acre.

Mystery Blast Thunder

A brilliant flash and mysterious explosion reported from the Gordon Head area about 9.30 last night was apparently caused by a rare winter electrical disturbance.

Saanich police investigated after reports of the blast were received at the police station and firehall, but found no signs of damage.

Norman Hutton, on duty at the Gordon Head wireless station, said he saw the flash and heard a "crash" outside the building at 9.16 and entered it in the log book as "lightning and thunder."

A number of residents in the area reported hearing a heavy bang or "thud."

The meteorological office on Gonzales Heights reported a thunderstorm at 7.45 p.m. and said: "We have been experiencing the beginning of a cold front here and thunderstorms often occur on such fronts."

Skill Contest Over 105 Miles

Reliability Test Run Draws 25 Drivers

More than 25 drivers are expected to enter the 105-mile reliability test run Sunday, sponsored by Regal Pacemasters custom car club.

Drivers coming closest to the predetermined time set by the judges will receive prizes of $15, $10 and $5.

Top four drivers will also receive an engraved plaque for dashboard mounting.

Race will start at 1 p.m. from the Safeway parking lot at Burnside and Tillicum. Two minutes before they are about to leave, drivers will be handed instructions. Cars will leave at two-minute intervals.

The event is described by the RPMS as a test of safe driving skill. Legal speed limits must be observed.

Entry fee is $1.50. Entries will be accepted up until starting time. The public is invited to participate. For information call George Almond, Jr., at EV 2-1910.

Need for Low-Cost Housing

Pensioners' Biggest Problem

Rent Eats Up Meal Ticket

By TED SHACKLEFORD

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Lack of decent, cheap housing is the biggest single problem facing Victoria's pensioners.

A number of Greater Victoria organizations are working to fill the need, but it will be years before they can provide the needed accommodation—if at all.

Pensioners are forced to live in low-grade accommodation in many cases, and pay inflated prices for it. And the money they spend on accommodation can't be spent on food or other necessities.

One of these pensioners is 76-year-old John Falk, who gets a $55 pension cheque each month. Almost one-half of it—$27—has to go to rent his small shack.

In more affluent days the shack might have been a summer house or a child's large playhouse. It has stained glass and leaded windows.

Inside it has two rooms with a pokey little pantry with sink off the kitchen. Mr. Falk heats it with a wood-burning stove. He leaves the oven door open for heat.

"I can't afford it but I do the best I can," he said yesterday. "You haven't got anything over at the end of the month, you know."

The shack has no bathroom. The only bathroom is in the main house, to the front of the block. Other pensioners are living in housekeeping rooms inside the house.

A small wood stove is the only heating in a two-roomed shack on Pandora rented by $55-a-month pensioner John Falk, 76. Water has to be heated in the saucepan Mr. Falk is putting on the stove, and the oven door is left open to warm up the uninsulated cabin. He is unable to work.—(Colonist photo.)

The linoleum on the floor is old and worn. The second room in the shack is used as a bedroom by Mr. Falk. It is half-filled by a metal double bed.

Tall and spare, Mr. Falk was shaving when I arrived to talk to him. He was shaving because he had visitors coming. It was hard for him as he has an injured arm.

Breakfast for Mr. Falk was merely a cup of tea. Lunch and dinner looked like being a rusty can of spaghetti and meatballs. He had only 15 cents left out of the pension cheque and nothing more to come until the end of the month. There was no other food in the house.

A few years ago he worked part-time during the summer, but lately his health has been too poor for that. But Mr. Falk can't afford to seek medical treatment . . . he just hasn't the money.

With nothing in the bank and no property, Mr. Falk seems eligible for the provincial bonus, but he hasn't done anything about it yet. He said yesterday he would apply for it soon.

Sometimes he "mortgages" his next pension cheque by getting credit with tradespeople. Sometimes he just doesn't eat.

Mrs. E. E. Harper, convenor of the Surplus Food Stall, who introduced me to Mr. Falk, will provide him with some food, if she hasn't already done so.

Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how senior citizens on old-age assistance payments live and what their problems are.

He will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111 — between 4 and 5 p.m. each day.

Mr. Falk and hundreds of men and women in the same situation would like nothing quite so much as decent, and inexpensive accommodation. The problem is to find it.

And the problem is also to find food for these people, food they can't afford because they are forced to pay too much for accommodation. Mrs. E. E. Harper, at EV 3-9874, needs more donations of food for the food stall which helps pensioners.

Breakfast for me yesterday was two pieces of shredded wheat and tea. Lunch was about a quarter of a pound of liver, some onions, peas and tea. Dinner was three weiners, fried potatoes and the rest of the peas.

Yesterday I bought two packets of cigaret papers (5 cents), a packet of frozen peas (23 cents), the weiners and half-a pound of pork liver (35 cents), four five-cent stamps and two coffees from a vending machine (20 cents), leaving me $21.23 until the end of the month.

Province Honored By Hotel

A permanent tribute to the province of British Columbia, in the form of a specially designed and decorated public room named for the province, will be unveiled Feb. 21 at official opening ceremonies of the new 400-room addition to the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

The British Columbia Room is decorated with authentic native art of the West Coast combined with B.C. fir panelling. Indian wood carvings, etched glass, special lighting fixtures and floor coverings of an original design highlighting the provincial crest and flower of British Columbia.

Few Hirings And Few Cuts

Provincial estimates indicate the government intends to stand pat on its civil service hiring.

There is no indication of any big slashing as there has been in the last two years, and no hint of big new hirings.

An increase of staff in the mental health department will be offset by reduction in tuberculosis control staff.

Estimates show salary increases for nearly every civil servant, but these only reflect the 7½ per cent increase, totalling $3,290,000, which was granted in July, 1957.

The 1959-60 estimates show a bulk entry of $1,500,000 increase for civil servants and it will be allocated by the Civil Service Commission.

The government expects to pay $7,440,000 in home-owner subsidies in the 1959-60 year.

The operation of the agent-general's office in London, England, will cost $53,937, up $16,061, which possibly reflects a program to intensify B.C. public relations work in continental Europe.

Estimates for the department of industrial development, trade and commerce are down from $709,527 to $698,957; department of labor down from $862,254 to $818,651, department of lands and forests down from $12,223,500 to $12,153,097, department of municipal affairs down from $160,106 to $159,100, department of railways down from $65,956 to $62,645, and department of recreation and conservation down from $2,292,893 to $2,174,484.

Estimates provide for a $200,000 grant under the Capital Improvement District Act, the same as last year for beautification of Greater Victoria.

Estimates for construction of provincial buildings are down $1,373,700 to $3,626,300, but this reflects the near-completion of Government House. The new Victoria courthouse is believed to be included in the estimate.

Totem Tourney Big Success

The third annual Totem bridge tournament enters its second day at the Empress Hotel today and is already described as a success by Frank Artlett, chairman of the Victoria unit of the American Contract Bridge League.

Almost 100 persons were playing during the first-day round yesterday, said Mr. Artlett. "It looks like it will be the most successful tournament so far."